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## UNIVERSITY SERMONS

Is there a fundamental difference in preaching to Scottish and to American university audiences? The sermons preached at Aberdeen<sup>1</sup> seem to present a marked contrast to those preached by Dr. Coffin<sup>2</sup> in America. While the volume of Aberdeen sermons represents twenty different preachers, there is a unity which is noted in the editorial preface as indicative that the sermons give some trustworthy knowledge of the teaching which prevails at present in Scotland. We should say that it is a very conservative teaching, and a somewhat theological preaching. Dr. Cooper thinks that the gift of tongues enabled the Corinthian Christians to preach the gospel in various languages to the visitors to that cosmopolitan city. Dr. Selbie says that all truth, even of physical science, "is wrapped up in Christ," whatever that may mean. The doctrine of the incarnation, Jesus as "Very God of Very God," is presented by Dr. Mitchell without any attempt to help the hearer to an appreciation of its meaning in experience. Formal theological phrases occur in many of the sermons, giving them a somewhat conventional homiletic character. Perhaps this would be quite acceptable in Scotland.

Very different are Dr. Coffin's sermons. He makes no use of formal theology. There is almost an entire absence of the set phrases of the older evangelism. There is a very definite recognition that the college student is thinking in new terms. The preacher takes it for granted that views have changed regarding miracles, Bible inspiration, Hebrew history, the interpretation of the advent narratives. He takes the hearer into his confidence, frankly preaching to him on the basis of his perplexity about some of these things. But he does not preach about critical matters. In almost every sermon he sets forth Jesus as the revelation of God. He means that the human, historical Jesus actually lived so wonderfully, taught so masterfully, died so sacrificially, that through him we know and trust and love God. The warm religiousness of these sermons is remarkable. They seem to answer the question: What is modern preaching? How shall a man speak his message frankly in this day? There is nothing negative, uncertain, apologetic. Varieties of interpretation, questions of authorship and of historicity are discussed

<sup>1</sup> *Sub Corona*. Sermons Preached in the University Chapel of King's College, Aberdeen, by Principals and Professors of Theological Faculties in Scotland. Edited by Henry Cowan and James Hastings. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1915. 297 pages.

<sup>2</sup> *University Sermons*. By Henry Sloane Coffin. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1914. 256 pages. \$1.50.

as matters of course. One comes to feel with the preacher that these problems all have their place for the student, and should receive careful attention, but that they are neither makers nor disturbers of religious experience. The great evangel, that we can know and trust God, that we can be forgiven and be saved, is clear and strong and makes earnest and direct appeal.

There are some strong sermons in the Aberdeen collection; and all are short, by the way, although Scotch. Principal George Adam Smith is not in his usual vein, for he has a special message on the war. Dr. Curtis has a wonderful discourse, largely of historical description, on the English Bible. It is a good example of what may be done in the use of historical material. Dr. Stalker has a most original sermon on Jesus' encomium of Mary, highly illuminative of Jesus' insight. Dr. Denney exhibits a fine homiletic skill in his sermon on the blessedness of living in the light of Jesus, and the compassion to be felt for those who do not. He finds in this compassion the great missionary motive.

The title of the book is suggested by the crown which surmounts the chapel at King's College.

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### THE PLACE OF RELIGION IN EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>

The National Education Association conducted a prize-essay contest last year on the above-named subject. The prize offered was one thousand dollars, and the essays were limited to ten thousand words. Widespread interest was taken in the contest, and four hundred and thirty-two essays were submitted to the judges. The prize was awarded to Professor Charles E. Rugh, University of California, and special mention was made of the essays presented by Professor Laura H. Wild of Lake Erie College, Miss Frances Virginia Frisbie of Wilkes-Barre High School, Rev. Clarence Reed of Palo Alto, California, and Miss Anna B. West, Newburyport, Massachusetts. These five essays are printed in the above-named monograph, together with a compilation, prepared by Miss Sarah Whedon of Ann Arbor High School, of the points made in the remaining four hundred and twenty-seven essays. Taken together, this collection is perhaps the best presentation of the various

<sup>1</sup> *The Essential Place of Religion in Education, and an Outline of a Plan to Introduce Religious Teaching into the Public Schools.* Ann Arbor: National Education Association, 1916. 134 pages. \$0.30.